

PIELUS HYALINATUS AND P. IMPERIALIS.

BY A. SIDNEY OLLIFF, F.E.S.

At the last meeting of this Society (*vide* p. 604) Mr. T. P. Lucas stated that the Hepialid described and figured by Mr. Prince and myself in these Proceedings* under the name *Pielus imperialis* is identical with the *Pielus hyalinatus*, a species which was figured by Herrich-Schäffer in 1853, but not described until 1855 when Walker included a diagnosis of it in the British Museum Catalogue.† Apparently this opinion is based on a comparison of a specimen from Gippsland, identified for Mr. Lucas as *P. hyalinatus* by my friend Mr. Meyrick, and the plates mentioned above. When Mr. Prince and I drew up the description of *P. imperialis* we referred to Walker's description, and with that description our moth does not agree, but we had no opportunity of consulting the figure of Herrich-Schäffer as the book in which it was published is not at present contained in any Sydney library. Recently, however, I have seen a tracing of this figure and I find that it certainly is not identical with that published in our Proceedings. In the first place it appears from the tracing that Herrich-Schäffer's figure represents a moth only about two-thirds of the size of the one figured by us, and that the silver markings on the forewings differ from those of *P. imperialis* both in size, number, and position; moreover, the labyrinthic markings on the forewings are not indicated, and the bright red margin beyond the purple base of the hindwings is much more clearly defined. I think, therefore, that the form *P. imperialis* may be regarded as specifically distinct from, although closely allied to, *P. hyalinatus*; but it is only right to add that this is not the opinion of Mr. Meyrick.

* Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W. (2), II., p. 1015, pl. 39 (1887).

† Cat. Lep. Het. B.M., p. 1576.

That energetic worker at our lepidoptera informs me by letter that he considers *P. imperialis* to be a variety of *P. hyalinatus*, brighter and more finely coloured, and adds that the variation in the genus *Pielus* is in part geographical. Whether it will be the best course to regard the *P. imperialis* as a geographical variety or as a species can only be decided after an examination of a large number of specimens, and perhaps after all it is not a matter of much importance.

In view of the interest which Mr. Lucas evidently takes in this particular group of moths, it is remarkable that he has not made himself acquainted with the sexual characters of the various species. Had he read the generic characters of *Pielus* as defined by Walker, Scott, and others, he would not have described a brick red moth with silver markings as the female of *P. hyalinatus*. It is well known that in the group of *Pielus* to which that species belongs the males have unipectinate antennæ, and the forewings provided with clearly defined white or silver markings; whereas the females have antennæ which to the naked eye appear moniliform, and forewings which are not provided with these distinctive markings.

Herrich-Schäffer's figure and that of *P. imperialis* represent males, and Mr. Lucas's specimens evidently belong to the same sex.